8:Campbell T-5 (no date) 1949 MH1 Iraq MH1

against my uncle. I must not reveal my identity to him.

So Rejab sat in the guest-house, and he was thinking: It is my right to marry this girl. How can I prevent the marriage? And Hamed looked around his guest-house and he saw a strange youth of great beauty seated there, and he asked: Who is he? They answered: He is one of the Shammar princes from Hail, and we do not know his name. Then Rejab rose and thanked his host and left the assembly, and he took his horse and rode off. But when he was in the cover of the palm trees he halted and turned to look at the house of Hamed, for he thought: I must carry off the girl this very day. He saw that the women's quarter was heavily guarded by slaves and eunuchs armed with swords, and all the doors to the courtyard were guarded, nor was it possible to gain entrance. But he saw also that the House of the Dawn was situated at a distance from the house, that its odours (may they be far from you) should not disturb the people of the house, and he cursed himself and thought: Had I come one day earlier I could have carried off the girl when she comes at dawn to visit the House of the Dawn, but now there is no time to wait another day. Then an idea came to him, and he took his horse and rode at a canter to Samawa.

In the bazaar of Samawa, Rejab bought first a woman's dress, and he wrapped it up and concealed it in his cloak. Then he went to the pharmacist and he bought three Roman pills. Now, let it be known to you that in these days we have many and complicated medicines, but then we had only simple remedies, and the Roman pill served both for a man and for his animals, for verily it was said, One for a man, two for a horse, three for a camel. And he took the three Roman pills and he went to the shop of the sweet maker and he bought from him a tray of the

8:Campbell T-5 (no date) 1949 MH1 Iraq MH1

*539 pigeon and doves and partridge and quail, and from every direction hundreds of the most beautiful girls in the world were coming and sitting down to the meal and wine was brought for them by Negro slave girls.

Nasirulla and Salma sat down and ate of the feast until their stomachs were bursting, nor did anyone question who they were. And when all hands were withdrawn from eating, the Chief of the Eunuchs came round and he talked to some of the girls, and he came to Nasirulla and Salma and he said to them: Your faces are new. Were you part of the last present to our Lord? And Salma replied: Verily we are new here, and our desire is to be of service to our Lord and Master. But the eunuch sighed and he said: How can this be? It was different in the days when our master was a young man, though even then he rarely needed more than three hundred girls a year. But now he is old and his beard is white and his eyes are dim and even [838 one girl would be too much for him. Yet we have three 595] thousand in this place, and every month another hundred arrive as presents from the great rulers and governers, and these poor girls are condemned to live unloved and unseen in this vast harem, until they kiss and make love to each other from very sadness of heart.

And Nasirulla was amazed at the words of the eunuch, and he thought: While I am here and until I find a way out of this closely guarded place I will at least comfort some of these poor girls.

On the next day and on the following days Nasirulla examined all the doors and windows of the harem, but they were all guarded by eunuchs armed with swords, nor could anyone pass in or out. And the days lengthened into months, but Nasirulla could find no place unguarded save one, and this was a window which was covered by